

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

February 15, 1957

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Department of Genetics
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Josh:

Thanks for your note that arrived just a day or two after our return from Mexico. It was difficult to leave such an idyllic spot as Puerto Vallarta, but now that I have been back for a few days I am rather beginning to like California again!

Since I don't know what the considerations are that will be decisive in affecting your choice of institutions (and needless to say this won't be the last opportunity you will have to make such a choice), it is difficult for me to know which angle to seize upon in an effort to be more persuasive. I can see why you might wish to stay at Wisconsin since, regardless of other considerations, it is always easier to stay put. I can also see why Berkeley might appeal to you, in view of the size of the genetic and general scientific community there. At all three of the institutions concerned, however, the working conditions would be excellent and not a restrictive factor in your functioning and productivity over the years.

In my own case - which of course is not comparable - I believe that I would under such circumstances choose the spot where living conditions would be the most congenial. And by living conditions I mean not only climate and Lebensraum, but the freedom and congeniality of academic atmosphere as well. On the latter score I think that private universities have some real advantages, and that Stanford is unexcelled. However, I am not really trying to sell you a bill of goods, partly because I know it wouldn't be effective in any case. But I would be remiss if I didn't emphasize my conviction - based on comparative observations - that Stanford is a really darn fine place to live and work.

You said that I might let you know what I had in mind, "officially or unofficially." What I have said is of course purely unofficial and not too relevant. I shall not attempt to be more official until Grobstein has been here (he is arriving the 18th for a few days) and he has made his decision and you have had a chance to talk with him, either by phone or in person. If you are really interested in coming to Stanford I think you should not be reluctant to state any demands that you may have in mind, since otherwise it is difficult for us to know what we can do to make things more attractive to you.

Stanford University


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There is no question that your lab space can be properly remodeled, and that a substantial annual allotment from our Rockefeller grant can be set aside for you, at least for a few years, until this becomes unnecessary. I really have no misgivings about the University's ability to support you properly, however, either now or in the future. And if salary is a decisive consideration, I suspect that further concessions in this direction can be made. However, this is all preliminary and unofficial, just to keep the pot simmering, and I shall be more definite after I have heard from you after you have seen or talked with Cliff.

In the meantime, best wishes for a good digestion and sound sleep in spite of your trying problems.

Sincerely,


Victor Twitty

VCT:gz